A B S T R A C T

The invention relates to a picture coding method for transmission on a channel at a low bit rate and with a high error rate, typically a channel with a bit rate less than 100 kbit/s and an error rate greater than 10^{-6}, or even 10^{-4}. The method uses motion estimation coding and divides the picture into a plurality of segments made up of macroblocks. According to the invention, at least for an edge macroblock of a segment, a motion estimation vector is allowed to extend into an adjacent segment. This is particularly advantageous for macroblocks situated top right of the segment if scanning for motion vector estimation is from left to right and top to bottom. This solution avoids errors caused by estimating motion vectors within segments and limits the propagation of coding errors caused by splitting the picture into segments.